

REMARKS

The Examiner has checked box 12b on the Office Action Summary Sheet indicating that some certified copies of the priority documents have been received. However, Applicant has claimed priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 to only one foreign application, JP 2000-186530. A certified copy of JP 2000-186530 was filed on November 7, 2001, and acknowledged by the Examiner by checking box 12a on the Office Action mailed June 17, 2004. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner acknowledge in the next Office communication that the certified copy of JP 2000-186530 filed on November 7, 2001 has been received and constitutes all the required certified copies of priority documents for this application.

Objections to the Claims

Claim 4 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, independent claim 1, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim. Applicant has canceled claim 4 and incorporated its features into independent claim 1.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,757,343 to Nagakubo ("Nagakubo"). Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 3.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 4, which has been canceled. As admitted by the Examiner, the subject matter of claim 4 is patentable. Since amended independent claim 1 now contains the patentable subject matter of canceled claim 4, amended independent claim 1 is patentable over the prior art.

Claim 2, which depends from independent claim 1, is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency. Amended independent claim 3 contains features similar to the features recited in claim 1 and is therefore patentable for similar reasons.

Conclusion

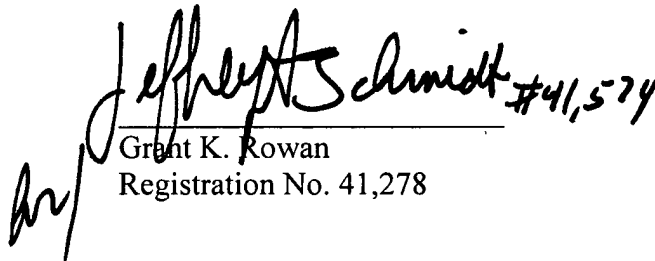
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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